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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6554
INFO RUFHPOL/POLISH SITUATION COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC//DC-4A/JSI-28/DB-1//
RUFONSI/CINCUSAREUR DCSI HEIDELBERG GE//AEAGB-C(RE)/AEAGB-PDN//
RUSNNOR/USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ2-P(CMO)//
RHFQAAA/HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE//INO//
RUETIAA/NSACCS FT MEADE MD//T5321/A2045/A22//
RHDLCNE/CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK//N2//
RHFBAAB/USCOB BERLIN GE//AEBA-IO//
RUDORRA/USNMR SHAPE BE//
RUEADWD/DA WASHDC//DAMI-FI//
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC//CRESS/RSG//
BT

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E.O. 12356: DECL OADR
TAGS: PGOV, KPRP, MCAP, PL
SUBJECT: POLISH RELIABILITY: A POLITICO-MILITARY ASSESSMENT
REF: A) 83 WARSAW 9552, B) WARSAW 10798, C) 83 WARSAW 10930
1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT).

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2. SUMMARY: POLISH RELIABILITY WITHIN THE WARSAW PACT DEPENDS ON AN INTERPLAY OF OBJECTIVE (MILITARY STRUCTURE-RELATED) AND SUBJECTIVE (POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL) FACTORS. THE PRESENT MIX OF THESE FACTORS PRODUCES A PICTURE OF DECLINING POLISH RELIABILITY BOTH PER SE AND IN SOVIET PERCEPTIONS. THE DECLINE IN RELIABILITY IS POTENTIALLY AGGRAVATED BY SOVIET INSISTENCE ON ACCELERATED POLISH FORCE MODERNIZATION WHICH, WITHOUT ACCOMPANYING LOANS OR GRANTS, WILL HAVE A FURTHER ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE POLISH ECONOMIC CRISIS, AND HENCE ON RELIABILITY. MOREOVER, THE SOVIETS ARE FACED WITH A DILEMMA: RELIABILITY WILL ALSO BE DECREASED IF THEY DO NOT PRESS FOR FORCE MODERNIZATION AS THE POLISH ARMED FORCES LAG EVEN FURTHER BEHIND IN MILITARY CAPACITY. THIS DILEMMA WILL BE AN IMPORTANT, THOUGH CONCEALED, FACTOR AFFECTING POLISH SELECTION OF SOLUTIONS FOR EASING ITS SOCIO-ECONOMIC CRISIS.

3. GENERAL: THE RELIABILITY OF THE USSR'S WARSAW PACT ALLIES IS A PERENNIAL PROBLEM PERPLEXING NO DOUBT TO SOVIET AND WESTERN POLICY-MAKERS AND OBSERVERS ALIKE. IT IS GENERALLY CONCEDED IN THE WEST (AND THE SOVIETS MIGHT AGREE) THAT THE RELIABILITY OF ONE OR ALL OF THE PACT NATIONS WILL BE DEPENDENT ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE EVENT OR EVENTS IN WHICH THE RELIABILITY IS PUT TO THE TEST. THIS "SCENARIO DEPENDENCE" IS TAKEN AS AN AXIOM OF THIS REPORT, WHICH TRIES TO LOOK AT THE GENERAL STATE OF POLISH RELIABILITY AS IT EXISTS TODAY, BUT WITHOUT REGARD TO ANY PARTICULAR STRATEGIC OR POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES. IN THIS THE AIM IS BROAD, GENERAL CONCLUSIONS BASED ON A FEEL FOR THE TEXTURE AND NATURE OF THE POLISH MILITARY SCENE (FOR THE MILITARY IS THE FOCUS IN QUESTIONS OF RELIABILITY) RATHER THAN ON THE MARSHALLING OF SPECIFIC FACTS.

4. AIM OF THE REPORT: WITHOUT ATTEMPTING TO BE EXHAUSTIVE, THIS REPORT ASSESSES WHAT THE INTERACTION OF OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE FACTORS AFFECTING RELIABILITY HAS PRODUCED IN TERMS OF PRESENT POLISH RELIABILITY WITHIN THE PACT. THE FACTORS THEMSELVES ARE SUMMARIZED, JUDGEMENTS MADE ABOUT POLISH RELIABILITY PER SE, SOVIET

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PERCEPTIONS OF POLISH RELIABILITY ESTIMATED, AND SOME CONCLUSIONS MADE ON POLISH RELIABILITY IN AGGREGATE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

5. FACTORS INFLUENCING RELIABILITY: THE RELIABILITY OF THE POLISH ARMED FORCES, LIKE MOST ANY OTHER MILITARY IN THE WORLD, DEPENDS ON THE COMBINATION AND INTER-ACTION OF A MULTITUDE OF FACTORS. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT, THEY MAY BE SEPARATED INTO TWO BROAD CATEGORIES: OBJECTIVE FACTORS (E.G., COMBAT CAPABILITY AND READINESS OF UNITS; NATURE AND STATUS OF MILITARY MATERIAL; PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FITNESS OF RECRUITS AND SOLDIERS; ADEQUACY OF COMMAND, CONTROL, COMMUNICATION AND INTELLIGENCE; SUPPLY AND TRAINING OF SUPPORT UNITS; ETC, ETC) AND SUBJECTIVE FACTORS (E.G. ATTITUDE OF THE POPULACE TOWARDS THE MILITARY; SELF-IMAGE OF THE MILITARY AND ITS STATUS IN SOCIETY; DOMESTIC OR INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CURRENTS AND CROSSCURRENTS, AND THEIR IMPINGEMENT ON THE MILITARY; ATTITUDES OF ALLIES TOWARD THE NATION AND ITS ARMY, AND VICE VERSA (THIS MAY BE THOUGH OF AS "LOYALTY"); SOCIAL COHESION IN THE NATION AS A WHOLE; ETC, 35;) THESE SETS OF FACTORS CORRESPOND ROUGHLY (IN REVERSE ORDER) TO THE TWO ELEMENTS IN THE TERM "POLITICO-MILITARY".

6. MIX OF CATEGORIES: NEITHER OF THE CATEGORIES NOTED ABOVE IS PURE; IN EACH THERE EXISTS AND FUNCTION ELEMENTS PROPER TO THE OTHER, AND NEITHER IS NECESSARILY DOMINANT IN THE RELIABILITY-JUDGEMENT EQUATION. HOWEVER, IN TIMES OF NATIONAL STRESS IN PEACETIME -- SUCH AS POLAND IS NOW PASSING THROUGH -- SUBJECTIVE FACTORS SEEM GENERALLY TO BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OBJECTIVE FACTORS. ON THE OTHER HAND, OBSERVERS NOT IN CONTACT DAILY WITH THE TEXTURE OF POLISH SOCIETY (TO BRING THE MATTER DOWN TO THE CONCRETE) TEND TO GIVE SOME SUBJECTIVE FACTORS MORE WEIGHT THAN THEY DESERVE. A CASE IN POINT IS THE WEIGHT GIVEN TO THE POSTULATED DISAFFECTION AND DISSENT OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF RECRUITS WITH

RESPECT TO THE PRESENT POLISH LEADERSHIP. THIS APPARS TO LOOM LARGE IN THE MINDS OF ANALYSTS, BOTH IN WESTERN AND

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EASTERN, BUT APPEARS TO HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON THE CAPABILITIES OF THE ARMY TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY.

7. OBJECTIVE FACTORS: OVER THE LAST 6 YEARS, INCLUDING THE 4 YEARS SINCE THE EVENT IN GDANSK IN 1980, THE COMBAT CAPABILITIES OF THE POLISH ARMED FORCES, BOTH IN THEMSELVES AND IN RELATION TO THE CAPABILITIES OF REST OF THE WARSAW PACT ARMED FORCES, HAVE SLOWLY DECLINED AND CONTINUE TO DECLINE. POLISH MILITARY EQUIPMENT IS ALREADY AT LEAST TWO GENERATIONS BEHIND SOVIET AND EAST GERMAN GEAR (E.G. POLISH T-55 TANKS, OT-64 APCs AND TOWED ARTILLERY, VERSUS SOVIET T-64/72/80 TANKS, BMP IFVs AND SELF-PROPELLED ARTILLERY), WHILE OTHER PACT COUNTRIES ARE ACQUIRING MORE MODERN EQUIPMENT FASTER. MOREOVER, WHAT THE POLES DO HAVE IS DETERIORATING THROUGH LACK OF ADEQUATE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR. THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS PROBLEM CAN BE JUDGED BY ALMOST DAILY HORATORY ARTICLES ON THE SUBJECT IN THE ARMY NEWSPAPER. POLISH UNIT TRAINING HAS BEEN HAMPERED BY SHORTAGE OF MONEY AND FUEL, AND THE ARMY, AS ADMITTED IN REPEATED ARTICLES BY THE CHIEF QUARTERMASTER OF THE ARMY OVER THE LAST 18 MONTHS, HAS ADOPTED THE EXPEDIENT OF USING OLDER EQUIPMENT IN TRAINING TO EASE WEAR AND TEAR ON NEWER WEAPONS AND VEHICLES, TO THE PROBABLE DETRIMENT OF SKILL ACQUISITION ON THE PART OF SOLDIERS. POLISH FIELD EXERCISES HAVE CONCENTRATED ON TACTICAL UNITS (BATTALIONS, REGIMENT), WITH OPERATIONAL UNIT (DIVISION AND ARMY) FIELD EXERCISES -- EXCEPT SOME FEW COMMAND POST EXERCISES BOTH ALONE AND COMBINED WITH OTHER PACT ALLIES -- UNOBSERVED OVER THE PAST 4-5 YEARS. FINALLY, POLISH FORCE MODERNIZATION IS PROCEEDING AT A SLOW PACE. THE INTRODUCTION OF T-72 TANKS AND BMP IFVs IS VERY SLOW, AND ALMOST NO NEW SELF-PROPELLED ARTILLERY HAS BEEN INTRODUCED. ONLY IN ARMY AIR DEFENSE MISSILES (SA-8) AND IN AIR-WARNING RADARS (OF DOMESTIC PRODUCTION) HAS SOME IMPROVEMENT BEEN NOTED IN THE PAST 2-3 YEARS.

8. OBJECTIVE FACTORS AND THE ECONOMY: THE DEBILITATED POLISH ECONOMY TODAY CANNOT COPE WITH THE RESOURCE INVESTMENT IMPLIED IN GENUINE MILITARY MODERNIZATION.

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NONETHELESS, THE SOVIETS (AND THE POLISH MILITARY, BUT PERHPAS FOR DIFFERENT REASONS) ARE PRESSING FOR RAPID INVESTMENT IN MODERN MILITARY HARDWARE (SEE [REDACTED])

[REDACTED] DTG 140823Z FEB 84). THE COSTS OF THIS MODERNIZATION, IF NOT BALANCED BY AN INFLOW OF CAPITAL IN THE FORM OF CREDITS OR GRANTS BY THE USSR, WILL INEVITABLY TEND TO DRIVE THE POLISH ECONOMY FURTHER DOWNHILL, ESPECIALLY INSOFAR AS CONSUMER GOODS ARE CONCERNED. POLISH FORCE MODERNIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF ITS COMBAT CAPABILITIES THROUGH EXPANDED TRAINING, IF DETERMINEDLY UNDERTAKEN, COULD PLACE THE POLISH ECONOMY IN A POTENTIALLY SERIOUS "SCISSORS". IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT RAPID MODERNIZATION IS NOT LIKELY IN THE SHORT RUN AND THAT OBJECTIVE FACTORS WILL CONTINUE TO AFFECT POLISH COMBAT CAPACITIES, AND THROUGH THEM POLISH RELIABILITY, NEGATIVELY.

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9. SUBJECTIVE FACTORS: IT IS CLEAR HERE THAT THE PRESTIGE OF THE POLISH MILITARY IS DECLINING IN THE EYES OF THE POLISH PEOPLE: MILITARY OFFICER SCHOOLS ARE NOT FILLED TO CAPACITY AND ADVERTISEMENTS FOR CADETS ARE SEEN IN THE PAPERS YEAR ROUND, ALONG WITH SONSTANT PUFFERY ON THE WORTH OF THE MILITARY; THE ARMY'S INABILITY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE NATION AS IT PROMISED IS OPENLY SNEERED AT BY POLES IN THE STREET; AND ROCKS HAVE BEEN THROWN AT MILITARY VIP BUSES IN A MAJOR CITY. IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN ACCOMPANYING LOWERING OF MORALE IN THE ARMED FORCES, BUT IN CONVERSATION WITH POLISH AND OTHER PACT OFFICERS AN EDGE OF UNEASINESS ABOUT THE PRESENT STATE OF POLAND AND ITS DIRECTION IN FUTURE APPEARS FROM TIME TO TIME. EFFECTS OF SOCIAL TURMOIL AND INTERNAL DISSENT OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS ON THE POLISH SOLDIERS THEMSELVES AND ESPECIALLY ON THE RECRUITS WHO MAKE UP THE BULK OF THE FIGHTING FORCES, ARE MORE DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT THE POLISH SOLDIER, LIKE SOLDIERS EVERYWHERE, PUTS ASIDE MOST ASPECTS OF HIS PERSONAL AND POLITICAL LIFE UPON DONNING HIS UNIFORM. A POLITICAL ANIMAL IN CIVILIAN LIFE, HE IS JUST A SOLDIER IN THE BARRACKS AND ON THE RANGE, A MEMBER OF A UNIT, LOYAL TO HIS CLOSEST BUDDIES

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AND CARRYING OUT THE ORDERS OF HIS SUPERIORS. IT IS THE CONSENSUS OF WESTERN MILITARY OBSERVERS HERE THAT SYMPATHIES WITH SOLIDARNOSC OR ATTITUDES OF DISSENT ON THE PART OF THE MASS OF CONSCRIPTS (ABOUT 80,000 A YEAR) HAVE NOT HAD ANY REAL EFFECT ON THE CAPACITY OF THE MILITARY TO CARRY OUT ITS TASK EITHER IN PEACETIME OR IN WAR.

10. RELIABILITY PER SE: ON BALANCE, THE POLISH ARMED FORCES ARE PROBABLY LESS RELIABLE THAN 5 YEARS AGO, BUT ARE CERTAINLY NOT UNRELIABLE IN ANY ABSOLUTE SENSE OF THE WORD. THE ARMED FORCES OF TODAY WILL PERFORM THEIR TASKS, THOUGH AT A SOMEWHAT REDUCED LEVEL OF CAPABILITY AND WITHOUT THE ALMOST ARROGANT SELF-CONFIDENCE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE POLISH ARMY A DECADE AGO. EVEN IN MATTERS OF INTERNAL SECURITY (ALTHOUGH USING THE ARMY IN SUCH CASES WOULD BE DISASTROUS TO ITS PRESTIGE AND MORALE) THE ARMY CAN BE EXPECTED TO PERFORM EFFICIENTLY.

11. THE SOVIET VIEW: HOW IS THE RELIABILITY OF POLAND AND ITS ARMED FORCES VIEWED BY THE SOVIET GENERAL STAFF (AND TO A LESSER DEGREE BY POLAND'S PACT PARTNERS)? THIS IS A CRUCIAL QUESTION, FOR IT HAS A DIRECT IMPACT ON ALMOST EVERY ASPECT OF SOVIET EUROPEAN STRATEGY THAT MIGHT INVOLVE POLAND AND ITS MILITARY POTENTIAL. UNFORTUNATELY, THE ANSWER IS NOT KNOWN, THOUGH THERE IS TENUOUS EVIDENCE AVAILABLE HERE (INDIRECT, FROM CONTACTS WITH SOVIET AND WARSAW PACT MILITARY ATTACHES) TO SUGGEST THAT THE SOVIETS PERCEIVE POLISH RELIABILITY TO BE DECLINING AS WELL. IF THE POLES, THROUGH SHEER LACK OF MILITARY CAPACITY MUST BE RELEGATED TO A SECONDARY ROLE IN PACT STRATEGY, THIS WILL HAVE A PROFOUND EFFECT ON SOVIET PLANNING. IT IS IN THIS RECEIVED RELIABILITY -- OR LACK OF IT -- THAT THE LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS OF THE FIRST YEARS OF THIS DECADE IN POLAND WILL MANIFEST ITSELF. WHEN POLISH DIVISIONS AND ARMIES ARE RELEGATED TO THE FOLLOW-ON ECHELON IN EXERCISES OR ARE BRIGADED WITH STRONGER OR MORE RELIABLE (READ: SOVIET) FORCES, CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF THE DECLINE IN POLISH RELIABILITY IN SOVIET EYES WILL BE DEMONSTRATED.

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12. THE RELIABILITY DILEMMA AND THE FUTURE: THE LONGER-TERM EFFECTS OF THE CURRENT POLISH DOMESTIC CRISIS ON THE IMPROVEMENT OR FURTHER DECLINE OF POLISH RELIABILITY CANNOT BE PRECISELY SEEN. BUT A GENERAL TREND IS DISCERNABLE. POLAND'S CRISIS IS FAR FROM SOLUTION. HOWEVER, EXIGENCIES AS THE SOVIETS SEE THEM SEEM TO MAKE IT DESIRABLE TO THE USSR THAT (AMONG OTHER THINGS) POLAND ACCELERATE FORCE MODERNIZATION. THESE REQUIREMENTS, IN THE ABSENCE OF INFUSIONS OF CAPITAL BY THE USSR TO CARRY THEM OUT, CAN BE EXPECTED TO AFFECT THE CURRENT CRISIS ADVERSELY, OR AT LEAST TO HINDER ITS MORE RAPID RESOLUTION. THIS WILL AFFECT POLISH RELIABILITY ADVERSELY. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF MODERNIZATION IS DEFERRED FOR POLITICO-ECONOMIC REASONS, POLISH RELIABILITY WILL ALSO BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED THROUGH A FURTHER DECLINE IN COMBAT CAPABILITY, AND SOVIET POLITICO-MILITARY STRATEGIES WILL HAVE TO BE MODIFIED TO TAKE THAT INTO ACCOUNT. THIS DILEMMA IS REAL, AND PRESSURES TO SOLVE IT WILL LIKELY BE AN IMPORTANT, IF CONCEALED, FACTOR IN THE LEADERSHIP'S SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS TO THE PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN POLAND OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

13. THIS REPORT WAS WRITTEN BY THE [REDACTED] IN SUPPORT OF THE EMBASSY'S POST REPORTING PLAN.
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END OF MESSAGE

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